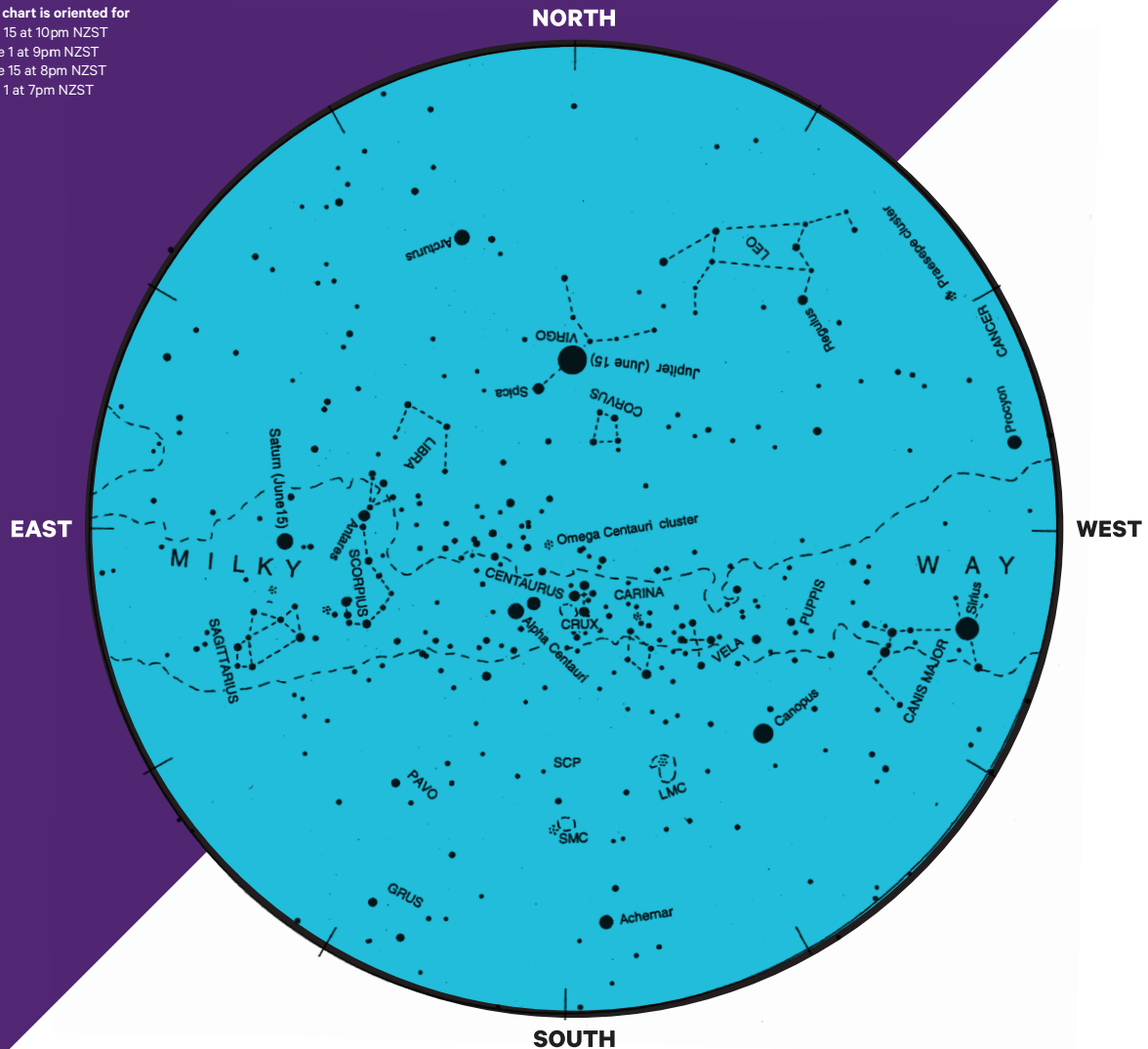


# What's up in Space?

## June 2017 Matariki Rising

The chart is oriented for  
May 15 at 10pm NZST  
June 1 at 9pm NZST  
June 15 at 8pm NZST  
July 1 at 7pm NZST



Golden Jupiter (Pareārau) sits in Virgo this month, just to the left of its brightest star Spica, appearing high in the northeast just after sunset. Saturn (Rongo) is below Scorpius/te Matau a Māui, midway up the eastern sky. It reaches opposition on the 15th, when it will be directly opposite the Sun in the sky and overhead at midnight. Saturn will also be at its closest to Earth around this time making it appear at its largest and brightest, although in practice any difference will be hard to spot with the naked eye. Its rings will be almost at maximum tilt so should be a wonderful sight through a small telescope.

This month we celebrate Matariki, or Māori New Year. The timing of this celebration is based on the heliacal rising of the small group of stars known as Matariki or the Pleiades. When Matariki first becomes visible before the Sun in our morning

skies, around early June each year, we know that the old year is coming to an end. The next new moon marks the beginning of the New Year. This year the new moon falls on the 24th of June, and may be visible a day or two after this.

To find Matariki, look for the three bright stars of Orion's belt / Tauru rising exactly due east before dawn and follow these to the left along the horizon. Go past a triangle of stars forming the head of Taurus, with red Aldebaran marking the bull's eye, and continue on to Matariki.

The timing of Matariki coincides with our winter solstice in the southern hemisphere, on the 21st of the month, the time when the south pole of the Earth points away from the Sun and we have our shortest day and longest night.